

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 00514 241747Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-09 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

SSM-05 AF-08 /099 W

-----242250Z 025049 /72-61

R 241535Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1434

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USMISSION USUN

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 0514

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PINT SY

SUBJ: SYRIAN MEDIA SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 23/24

1. MEDIA HIGHLIGHTED MOVES TOWARDS ARAB UNITY AND CABINET SHAKE-UP IN IRAQ, INTERPRETING LATTER AS RESULT DETERIORATING DOMESTIC SITUATION AND SIGNS OF MUTINY IN IRAQI ARMY. PRESS HEADLINED: "FIERCE STRUGGLE FOR POWER IN BAGHDAD....COUP POSTPONED AT LAST MOMENT WHILE MILITARY BUREAU DISMISSED." REGARDING UNITY MOVES, PRESS BANNERED: "KING HUSSEIN - 'ARAB MEETINGS AT SUMMIT LEVEL TO TAKE PLACE SHORTLY'".

2. IRAQ. MEDIA TOOK FIERCE DELIGHT IN WHAT INTERPRETED AS UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 DAMASC 00514 241747Z

UPHEAVALS IN IRAQ. IT REPORTED THAT COUP BY SEVERAL MILITARY UNITS FORESTALLED AT LAST MOMENT. ARTICLES CLAIMED SADDAM HUSSEIN AND OTHER MEMBERS OF "TRIBAL REGIME OF BAGHDAD" WERE FORCED TO MEET WITH MILITARY LEADERS IN CAMP ABU GHAREEB ON OUTSKIRTS OF BAGHDAD WHICH LED TO EXPANSION OF COMMAND COUNCIL FROM 14 TO 21 MEMBERS. INCREASE IN NUMBER OF NEW MINISTERS ALSO INTERPRETED AS

TACTIC PERMITTING PRESENT GOVERNMENT TO RETAIN POWER.
PRESS PREDICTED FURTHER DETERIORATION IN IRAQ. WAVE
OF ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS ALLEGED INCLUDING ATTEMPT
AGAINST A MOSUL INTELLIGENCE OFFICER ON JAN 12, WHO
REPORTED SERIOUSLY WOUNDED IN HOSPITAL.

3. SECOND ARTICLE ON IRAQ BANNERED: "FASCIST IRAQI
REGIME BORROWS ONE BILLION DOLLARS FROM JAPAN* BUT WHERE
ARE IRAQ'S RESOURCES?" ARTICLE REPORTED THAT IRAQ HAD
OBTAINED TWO BILLION DOLLARS IN LOANS FROM JAPAN SINCE
1974 AND WENT ON TO SAY THAT ITS OIL REVENUES ALONE
EXCEEDED ITS NEEDS. MOST OF THESE FUNDS, ARTICLE CHARGED,
WENT TO CONSPIRING AGAINST ARAB CAUSE AND ARAB PEOPLE OF
IRAQ.

4. LEBANON. PRESS REPORTED SARKIS' ORDER TO ADF COMMANDER
TO SEARCH FOR HEAVY WEAPONS IN SUSPECTED AREAS. HUSS TV
INTERVIEW ALSO REPORTED IN SAME ARTICLE IN WHICH HE
REJECTED DECENTRALIZATION BECAUSE IT WOULD SANCTIFY
PARTITION. HUSS QUOTED AS SAYING IT UNLIKELY PRESS WILL
ACT AS IT HAD IN THE PAST "BECAUSE WE WILL NOT ALLOW
PRESS...TO HARM OUR RELATIONS WITH ARAB STATES."

5. EDITORIALS TENDED TO CONCENTRATE ON RECENT MOVES
TO BRING ABOUT COORDINATION IN ARAB EFFORTS. AL-BAATH
SPOKE OF ERECTING "STRATEGIC WALL" AROUND ISRAEL TO SERVE
AS AN "EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE" IF GENEVA CONFERENCE FAILS.
EDITORIAL SUGGESTED SYRIA IN FOREFRONT OF ERECTING THIS
WALL IN ORDER FULFILL "CURRENT NATIONAL REQUIREMENT"
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PAGE 03 DAMASC 00514 241747Z

IMPOSED BY DANGER REPRESENTED BY "AN ENTITY, CANCEROUS IN
ITS AMBITIONS AND EXPANSION."

6. EDITORIAL IN TISHRIIN INTERPRETS PRES ASAD'S CON-
GRATULATORY MESSAGE TO PRES CARTER AS AFFIRMING IN
DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE SIGNIFICANT ROLE U.S. COULD PLAY IN
REGION BY SPEEDING UP JUST SOLUTION WHICH WOULD TAKE INTO
CONSIDERATION INTERESTS OF AMERICAN PEOPLE AND INTERESTS
OF PEACE. NOTED THAT ARABS, WHILE WISHING NEW AMERICAN
ATTITUDE, WERE NOT EXPECTING MIRACLE. ARABS ASKING FOR
US "NEUTRALITY" AND RESPONSIVENESS TO "INTERNATIONAL WILL."
ACCORDING COLUMNIST, THIS MEANS EXERCISING PRESSURE ON
ISRAEL TO FORCE ITS WITHDRAWAL AND RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN
RIGHTS.
MURPHY

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition History: n/a
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